When we say organics recycling, we are referring to all solid waste management activities that collect, process, and use organic-derived materials.

Regulations and Policy
In recent years, many states have enacted legislation and regulation to promote organics diversion from solid waste disposal facilities. Some of the more prominent efforts are described in the paragraphs below.

California—CalRecycle is currently operating under strategic directives adopted in February 2007, and revised in March and June 2009. Under these directives, CalRecycle seeks to reduce by 50% the amount of organic waste disposed in the state's landfills by 2020. This directive also encompasses one of CalRecycle's actions to help California reduce its generation of greenhouse gases under the state's Climate Change Scoping Plan. The development of anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities is one of CalRecycle's charges under the Plan. CalRecycle intends to adopt the AD Initiative, a comprehensive program to foster the development of AD facilities to convert organic solid wastes into sources of energy, valuable compost feedstocks, soil amendments, and other products. California is also revising its existing solid waste regulations regarding compostable materials, transfer and processing, permit application form, and permit exemptions.

Connecticut—On June 30, 2011, the state of Connecticut enacted PA 11-217, which requires certain commercial entities that generate an average of at least 104 tons of source-separated organic (SSO) materials a year to separate and compost food waste, if a permitted SSO material composting facility is not more than 20 miles from such generators. The law took effect October 1, 2011, or not later than six months after the establishment of service in the state by two or more permitted SSO material composting facilities. As of this past summer, there was only one permitted SSO facility in operation in the state.

Illinois—Commercial composting sites are regulated like a landscape waste compost facility, rather than a pollution control facility. Commercial compost sites are still subject to setback requirements (regulating distance from schools and hospitals) and requirements concerning odor and nuisance control.

Massachusetts—The Draft 2010-2020 Massachusetts Solid Waste Master Plan (Plan) proposed ambitious goals of reducing the quantity of waste disposed in the Commonwealth by 30% (2 million tons) by 2020. A major proposed priority is to significantly increase the diversion of organic material from the solid waste stream, from the 100,000 tons that were diverted in 2009 to 450,000 tons by 2020, an increase of 350,000 tons per year. Meeting this goal will require significant increases in in-state capacity at aerobic digestion, anaerobic digestion, composting, and recycling facilities.

As such, MassDEP amended the Massachusetts Site Assignment Regulations (310 CMR 19.00), with an effective date of November 23, 2012. Depending on the type and size of a facility that is handling only source-separated organic material, it would be:

- exempt from MassDEP site assignment and solid waste regulations;
- operating under a "general permit"; or
- operating with a facility-specific Recycling/Composting Conversion Permit from MassDEP (this permit program would replace the "determination of need" process).

Under a general permit, operations or activities that meet specific criteria can be built and operated without a site-specific permit from MassDEP, as long as they meet the conditions established in the regulation. Two groups of operations would be eligible for a general permit:

- Composting operations, with a maximum capacity of 50,000 cubic yards of organic material on-site at any time. The composting operations would be limited to accepting 105 tons of putrescible materials per week.
- Anaerobic or anaerobic digestion facilities that accept up to 100 tons per day of source-separated organic material that is pumped directly into the digester unit or a sealed storage tank.

MassDEP is also expected to add commercial organic material to its "waste ban" regulations, with an effective date of summer 2014. Waste bans are prohibitions on the disposal, transfer for disposal, or contract for disposal...
of certain hazardous and recyclable items at solid waste facilities in Massachusetts. "Commercial Organic Material" is expected to be defined as food material and vegetative material from any commercial or institutional entity, public or private, that generates more than one ton of that material per week, but excluding material from residences.

Ohio—The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency modified its composting rules in order to encourage more food composting, improve performance and effectiveness at composting facilities, and allow the use of wood as a bulking agent. New Administrative Code chapter 3745-560, Composting Facilities, became effective April 2, 2012.

Oregon—In December 2012, Oregon adopted a document entitled, "2010 Vision for Materials Management in Oregon." One policy is to develop a strategy to increase recovery of food waste and yard waste and to limit them from entering the disposal stream of wastes destined for landfill or incineration. The state will consider the use of incentives to increase recovery such as consideration of mandates for food scrap collection in areas with composting or anaerobic digester capacity at a reasonable price. In consultation with local governments and other partners, the state may ban food scraps from entering the disposal stream (destined for landfill or incineration) by 2025. DEQ has formed an advisory committee to provide input for creating rules covering conversion technologies facilities. Conversion technologies consist of a variety of biological, chemical, and thermal (excluding incineration) processes that convert solid waste into chemicals, fuel, and other products. Examples of conversion technologies include anaerobic digestion.

Vermont—With an effective date of July 1, 2012, Vermont passed Act 148, which calls for all residents to recycle or compost food waste by 2020 and prohibits the disposal of recyclable and compostable materials in landfills. The Vermont law begins phasing-in with large food waste generators in 2014. By instituting phased-in bans on certain materials (recyclables, leaf and yard residuals, and food residuals) and by requiring parallel collection (requiring collection of these materials at the same location where trash is collected), more of these materials can be diverted from disposal. The bans and mandates will be phased in over the next eight years.

The requirement to separate food residuals is only triggered when a generator exceeds a specified threshold amount and the generator is located within 20 miles of a certified organics management facility that has capacity and will accept the residuals. By July 1, 2020, any person generating any amount of food residuals will be required to manage the residuals onsite or arrange for their transfer.

Municipal Programs

San Francisco—The most prominent local organics collection program is in San Francisco, where homes have three bins: green for compostable, blue for recyclables, and black for the rest.

The city's series of pilot programs, started in the late 1990s, tested a variety of important collection issues such as the type of organic material collected, bin size and configuration, type of vehicles used, and collection frequency. This experience prompted the city to decide to collect all three waste categories weekly on the same day, using side-loading, single- and dual-compartment, semi-automated compacting vehicles. This configuration allows the dual-compartment truck to be operated by a single employee and serve roughly 1,800 to 2,000 customers per week with the dual-compartment truck, and about 6,000 customers per week with the single-compartment truck.

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the levels of participation and anticipated recovery rates. The program is now being rolled out to multifamily buildings (apartments, condos, and co-ops) receiving city collection since nearly 40% of the city's residents live in apartments. Toronto carefully planned the logistics of its collection program. Currently, the city uses split-compaction trucks operated by franchise haulers that pick up organics on a weekly basis, at the same time using the other compartment to collect either refuse or single-stream recyclables. Residents are provided with a 16-gallon container for the kitchen and a 16-gallon wheeled cart to place out at the curb. As designed, the program collects almost all organic materials including food and vegetable scraps, meat, fish, and dairy products, pasta, bread, cereal, coffee grounds and filters, paper food packaging, diapers, sanitary products, household plants, and animal waste. Yardwaste is collected separately, rolled out to multifamily buildings (apartments) for these units.

Toronto uses a state-of-the-art anaerobic digester facility, which was designed to remove organic materials including food and vegetable scraps, meat, fish, and dairy products, pasta, bread, cereal, coffee grounds and filters, paper food packaging, diapers, sanitary products, household plants, and animal waste. Yardwaste is collected separately, depending on the season.

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